

GREYSTONE®

November 1, 2000

Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Michael Dahl, Division Manager
Power System Operations
Platte River Power Authority
2000 E. Horsetooth Road
Fort Collins, CO 80525-5721

Re: *Platte River Power Authority Boyd-Valley Segment of the Western Area Power Administration Flatiron-Weld Transmission Line Class III Cultural Resource Inventory*

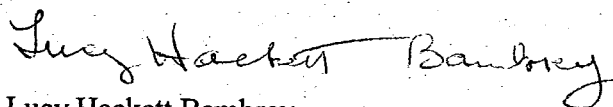
Dear Mr. Dahl:

Enclosed is a copy of the *Platte River Power Authority Boyd-Valley Segment of the Western Area Power Administration Flatiron-Weld Transmission Line Class III Cultural Resource Inventory, Larimer County, Colorado* report for your review. This report summarizes the results of the cultural resources/archaeological survey that was performed in Larimer County, Colorado at the request of Platte River Power Authority. As indicated by the cc below, two copies have been sent to Rodney Jones at Western Area Power Administration for review. We are holding a copy of the report for the Colorado SHPO pending review and will send it to Western to submit after Platte River's and Western's approval.

A total of 40.9 acres was surveyed. Three historic/archaeological sites were located. These included site 5LR1729.2 (Big Thompson Ditch), site 5LR9887 (historic trash scatter), and site 5LR9888 (Burlington Northern Railroad). Site 5LR1729.2 (Big Thompson Ditch) is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with events significant to local history. Sites 5LR9887 and 5LR9888 (Burlington Northern Railroad) are not considered eligible. Cultural resource clearance is recommended for the project as surveyed with the stipulation that the Big Thompson Ditch be avoided during the upgrade of the line. If avoidance is not possible, archival photography and documentation of the ditch is recommended.

Please contact me at 303.850.0930 or lbambrey@greystone-consultants.com with any questions.

Sincerely,



Lucy Hackett Bambrey
Senior Environmental Planner

/attachment

cc: Rodney Jones, Western
Mary Barger, Western
Larry Keith, Greystone



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Colorado Field Office
755 Parfet Street, Suite 361
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

IN REPLY REFER TO:

ES/CO:T&E
Mail Stop 65412

NOV 1 2000

Mr. Thomas Ryon
Greystone Environmental Consultants, Inc.
5231 South Quebec Street
Greenwood Village, Colorado 80111

Dear Mr. Ryon:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received your letter of August 9, 2000, regarding the Platte River Power Authority's proposed upgrade of two existing electric transmission lines near Loveland and Fort Collins, Colorado. You requested a list of Federal endangered and threatened species that may exist in the project area. These comments have been prepared under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.).

The Service has no specific knowledge of the project site; however, enclosed is a list of Federal endangered, threatened, proposed and candidate species, by county, in Colorado. The list for Larimer County can be used as a basis for determining species potentially present in the project area.

While other species could occur at or visit the project area, endangered or threatened species most likely to occur include:

- Birds: Bald eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, Threatened
Mountain plover, *Charadrius montanus*, Proposed Threatened
- Mammals: Preble's meadow jumping mouse, *Zapus hudsonius preblei*, Threatened
- Plants: Ute ladies'-tresses orchid, *Spiranthes diluvialis*, Threatened
Colorado butterflyplant, *Gaura neomexicana* spp. *coloradensis*, Threatened

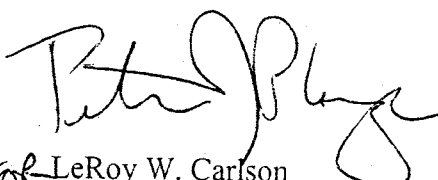
The Service also is interested in the protection of species which are candidates for official listing as threatened or endangered (Federal Register, Vol. 61, No. 40, February 28, 1996). While these species presently have no legal protection under the ESA, it is within the spirit of this Act to consider project impacts to potentially sensitive candidate species. It is the intention of the Service to protect these species before human-related activities adversely impact their habitat to a degree that they would need to be listed and, therefore, protected under the ESA. Additionally, we wish to make you aware of the presence of Federal candidates should any be proposed or listed prior to the time that all Federal actions related to the project are completed. If any candidate species will be unavoidably impacted, appropriate mitigation should be proposed and discussed with this office.

While the Service has no specific knowledge of the presence of these species within the project area, the following may occur in or visit the project area.

Mammals: Swift fox, *Vulpes velox*, Candidate
Black-tailed-prairie dog, *Cynomys ludovicianus*, Candidate

If the Service can be of further assistance, contact me at (303)275-2343.

Sincerely,


For LeRoy W. Carlson
Colorado Field Supervisor

cc: Reading file
Project file

Reference: Specieslist/PRPA

November 3, 2000

Mike Dahl, Division Manager
Power System Operations
Platte River Power Authority
2000 E. Horsetooth Road
Ft Collins, CO 80525-5721

RE: TRANSMITTAL OF THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES LETTER FROM
THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

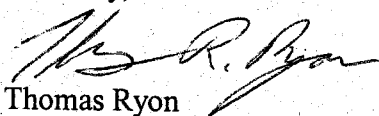
Dear Mike:

Attached is a letter we received yesterday from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in response to a letter we sent them, dated 9 August 2000, in which we asked for a list of federally listed, proposed or candidate species likely to occur in the Boyd-Valley and Rawhide to Fort Collins project areas.

We had already begun work with a species list we had developed from a Larimer County listing of threatened and endangered species and the list John Fooks provided to Larry Keith on 31 July. The list John provided includes species that were of interest to Larimer County personnel.

This letter simply confirms that the list we developed is correct and that no additional work is required. We will include this letter in our reports.

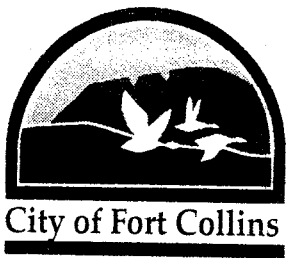
Sincerely,



Thomas Ryon
Staff Ecologist

Attachment

cc: R. Jones, Western
L. Keith, Greystone
K. Cloutier, Greystone



November 8, 2000

Tom Ryon
Greystone Environmental Consultants, Inc.
5231 South Quebec Street
Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Dear Tom:

I checked the transmission line project alignment in the field. The City owns quite a few properties along the alignment and the Natural Resources Department (NRD) has a number of concerns regarding plants, wildlife, and their habitat. These are our initial comments, but we will likely have additional comments as this project progresses.

We consider the Poudre River Corridor to contain some of the highest quality wildlife habitat in the City. Extreme care would need to be taken to protect wetlands, riparian areas, upland habitats, and native plant communities during pole and line installation. All areas disturbed during pole construction and line installation, including equipment staging areas, would need to be reseeded/replanted with species native to the Fort Collins area. Natural Resources Department (NRD) would want to approve all seed mixes/planting lists. Construction easements would need to be obtained from the City for any work done on City property outside of the current easements, including equipment staging areas. In addition, there are several locations where lines cross the paved bike trail system, both Poudre River Trail and Spring Creek Trail. Care would need to be taken with the use of heavy equipment on/near the pavement to not damage any concrete. Any damaged concrete sections would need to be replaced as per Parks specifications.

The following are some specific comments we have regarding sites along the alignment.

Pole Replacement Section From West to East:

1. West of Shields, NRD is negotiating with the landowner for purchase of part of this property for preservation as a natural area. The site has been gravel mined, but does provide excellent habitat for wildlife.
2. Immediately east of Shields and west of McMurry Natural Area, NRD owns and manages a natural area site that contains a pole and the lines cross a pond.

3. McMurry Natural Area, currently owned and managed by the County, will soon (by early 2001) be owned and managed by NRD. We are extremely concerned about the location of one of the poles on this site. It is on a small peninsula in the middle of a pond area. We would like to explore any opportunities there may be to move the poles on this and site #2 farther north so that lines do not cross the ponds.
4. Northeast of McMurry, the poles are currently located along the southern boundary of two City-owned sites: Hickory Natural Area (owned and managed by NRD) and Hickory Park (owned and managed by City of Fort Collins Parks Department). Hickory Park is currently undeveloped. Park Planning and Development staff will be doing some design work on this park in mid-2001. Their concerns include having the transmission line cross the park where they need to install facilities, restrooms, etc., and the potential visual impact on park users. Craig Foreman, Park Planning and Development Director (970-221-6618) needs to be involved in any meetings where discussions are going to be about crossing the Hickory Park area.

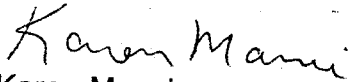
Line Upgrade Section From West to East:

5. North of Mulberry, the poles/lines cross a natural area owned and managed by the Water Utility as part of their Mulberry Water Reclamation Facility. This site has a well-developed riparian area with a high diversity of plant and animal communities.
6. South of Mulberry and west of Lemay, the poles/lines cross the Springer Natural Area, owned and managed by NRD and Stormwater Utility. Toward Mulberry, Stormwater is in the process of constructing the Locust Stormwater Outfall. This is a very intricate Stormwater retention/wetland creation (for water quality improvement) project. Link Mueller (Project Manager, 224-6039) needs to be consulted for the impact of the transmission line project on this Stormwater Project. One of only two known state populations of the American Black Currant, a Colorado Rare Plant Species, occurs on the site between the Stormwater Outfall Project and Lemay. Extreme care must be taken to not impact this population in any way. In addition, this site is known as a key area for migratory and resident butterflies and songbirds, as well as a key area for wintering waterfowl.
7. East of Lemay to Prospect, the poles/lines border or cross three natural areas owned and managed by NRD: Springer (continuation of site west of Lemay), Bignall, and Nix. In late 2001-early 2002, NRD will be constructing the Natural Areas Maintenance Facility at the Nix site. Although the lines run along the western boundary and not through the site, close coordination with NRD will be necessary because construction of underground utilities and/or entrance road could be taking place at the same time as the line work.

8. South of Prospect, NRD owns the Coterie Natural Area, which contains one of the poles. This is a small natural area that contains a prairie dog colony. NRD has installed a vinyl and shrub prairie dog barrier around the site, which includes a section along the line of the transmission line. Any damage to these structures during stringing of the line must be repaired per NRD specifications.

There have been some surveys for Preble's meadow jumping mouse and Ute ladies'-tresses orchid conducted on some of the sites within the transmission line alignment. Contact Bob Zakely (Construction/Erosion Control Inspector; 970-224-6063) for information on those surveys.

Sincerely,



Karen Mancini
Senior Environmental Planner

- cc. Mark Sears, Natural Areas Program Director
 \ Craig Foreman, Park Planning and Development Director
 \ Link Mueller, Project Manager, Utilities
 Bob Zakely, Construction/Erosion Control Inspector, Utilities